

HIMALAYAN UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM BYLAWS

Endorsed by the General Assembly
HUC Annual Meeting
Kathmandu, 31 October 2018



List of Abbreviation

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| HUC | Himalayan University Consortium |
| HKH | Hindu Kush Himalaya |
| ICIMOD | International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development |
| SC | Steering Committee |
| SMD | Sustainable Mountain Development |
| TWG | Thematic Working Group |

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Membership Review Task Force, 2017-2018

At the HUC Steering Group meeting held in Kathmandu in March 2017, a special task force was established, consisting of three members, Professor Ashok Gurung (Senior Director, India China Institute, The New School, New York; Steering Group member), Professor Xu Jun (Executive Chair, Himalaya Multimedia Database Project, Center for Tibetan Studies, Sichuan University; Steering Group member), and Dr Chi H Truong (Programme Coordinator, ICIMOD; HUC Secretariat Lead). The aim was to review the HUC membership policies and provide recommendations to the Steering Group.

During an exposure visit to the International Secretariat of the UArctic in Rovaniemi (Finland), July 2017, selected members of the Steering Group and the Task Force learned from the experience of the UArctic, a 185-member consortium from eight countries of almost three decades of development in service of circumpolar communities.

At the Steering Group meeting in Sichuan University in Chengdu in November 2017, Professor Xu Jun presented an overview and comprehensive assessment of higher education institutions in China concerning the Hindu Kush Himalayan region. On behalf of the Membership Review Task Force, Professor Ashok Gurung presented lessons learned from the UArctic visit and recommendations. Upon the briefing by the Steering Group at the Annual Meeting, the General Assembly requested to incorporate these recommendations in the consultative process for the Strategy and Action Plan 2025.

The Strategy Drafting Committee, led by Dr Bahardar Nawab Khattak (COMSAT, Abbotabat, Steering Group Member), endorsed the recommendation of the Task Force and drafted the Bylaws. These Bylaws incorporated inputs from heads of member institutions and senior scholars and faculty members in a series of consultative meetings in New Delhi, Islamabad, Thimphu, Australia, Nay Pyi Taw, and Pokhara in 2017 and 2018.

The Himalayan University Consortium

The Himalayan University Consortium (est. 2007) has as its mandate to develop an effective and sustainable network of universities in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region, in collaboration with academic research and knowledge generating and exchange institutions both within and outside the region. This network engages top-notch professional women and men capable of undertaking high-quality research, education, teaching, and knowledge dissemination in service of a mountain-specific, sustainable, fair and inclusive development for HKH communities and adjoining mountainous areas. The HUC and its members abide to the HUC Bylaws that guide the membership, structure, General Assembly, Steering Committee, Secretariat and amendment in the Bylaws. The Bylaws

override any other processes and practices previously in vogue, with the exception of the HUC Charter. Amendments in the Bylaws will be possible through voting by a two-thirds majority of all members, either present or via e-voting, with at least 50% of all members as a minimum quorum in the General Assembly.

HUC Charter

The HUC Charter was first endorsed by members at the HUC Summit in Kathmandu, October 2015. It serves as the binding document that articulates the Vision, Mission, Objectives, and Functions of the Consortium. The Charter is to be signed by the Head of the Institution upon approval of the General Assembly to formalize the membership of respective institution.

HUC Membership

The HUC has the following membership categories:

Full Members

Full Members of HUC are institutions and organizations with an interest in and commitment to higher education and research on mountains and in the HKH, located in the eight HKH countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, Myanmar, and Pakistan.

Associate Members

Associate Members of HUC are institutions and organizations with an interest and commitment to higher education and research on mountains and in the HKH, located outside the eight HKH countries.

Within each membership categories there are two member types: higher education institutions, and knowledge organizations.

Educational institution members

Educational Institution members are universities, colleges, and other institutions of higher education having their own registered students.

Knowledge organization members

Knowledge organisation members include research institutions and other knowledge organizations concerned with education and research about mountains and the HKH. Subsidiary entities of Higher Education Institutions such as independent institutes, branch campuses, and departments, qualify as knowledge organizations.

Participation and Representation

All members may participate in and lead the development and delivery of HUC programme activities.

All members have equal rights of representation in the General Assembly, with each member having one representative and one alternative representative (focal persons). Each member is entitled to develop its own procedures for selecting its representative and alternative representative in the General Assembly.

All members have equal nomination and voting rights, both Full and Associate Members, including voting on changes to HUC's membership, amendments to the HUC Charter and Bylaws, composition of the Steering Committee and any other matter brought to the attention of the General Assembly by a two-thirds majority of all members, either present or via e-voting, with at least 50% of all members as a minimum quorum in the General Assembly.

Eligibility Criteria

In acting on application for membership, the General Assembly is guided by the following criteria:

- demonstrated commitment to HUC's mission and values;
- demonstrated commitment and capacity to actively contribute to the development of HUC and its joint programmes among HUC member institutions;
- demonstrated commitment and capacity to actively contribute to the development of HUC research, education, capacity building, and knowledge dissemination in SMD for the HKH;
- willingness to provide in-kind support, services, or material resources helpful to the operation and development of HUC;
- links to major HKH constituencies.
- Higher education institution applicants are also evaluated on the following additional criteria:

- willingness and capacity to jointly develop and/or deliver HUC academic programmes;
- willingness and capacity to contribute existing expertise and materials to HUC joint activities;
- demonstrated commitment to regional collaboration in research and education, including strong faculty and student involvement in research on mountains and the HKH.

Membership Obligations

Members are required to comply with HUC's reporting requirements, including detailed annual updates of the institutional profile on the HUC Online Portal.

Members are strongly encouraged to participate in the General Assembly Meeting and Vice Chancellors' Forum and to take part in e-voting for membership.

Associate members and better resourced full members are responsible for supporting their own participation at the Annual Meeting and other HUC events. In future, a HUC membership fee will be introduced.

Resignation and Removal of Membership

Any member may resign from the HUC network by providing written notice to the General Assembly or by giving notice thereof at the General Assembly Meeting, which would then be recorded in the minutes.

The HUC Secretariat shall provide a warning to any member that fails to meet its obligations during a given year. Failure to comply with HUC's reporting requirements shall lead to the member being recommended for placement on the warning list for removal from the roster of active HUC members.

Failure to attend three consecutive General Assemblies with a sufficiently high-level representation will lead to a member being relegated to the inactive status.

The General Assembly may remove a member by vote taken during its meeting, with the reason for dismissal contained in a proposal that must be made available in accordance with the General Assembly rules of procedure. Prior to action on the proposal, the member must be given the opportunity to respond to the matter.

A member under inactive status or removed from membership must re-apply to become a member.

Membership Term

The HUC membership is valid for six years renewable upon submission of written notice of renewing membership and providing an update on HUC achievements. HUC Fellows and

HUC Fellows and Affiliates

Individual scholars and professionals who were recipients of HUC individual grants or took part in HUC-led trainings and Academies are qualified as *HUC Fellows*.

Distinguished individual scholars and professionals who have a strong interest in and commitment to HUC mission and values and who are affiliated with non-HUC members may be invited to be *HUC Affiliates*. An HUC Affiliate may be asked to serve as a special advisor for programme areas in which his or her special competence may be relevant.

An HUC fellow or affiliate has no fixed term of office and is not responsible individually or collectively for the operation of HUC activities.

Women and people of socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds will be encouraged to apply and given preferences as HUC Fellows and Affiliates.

The HUC General Assembly

The HUC General Assembly provides strategic leadership for programme development. The General Assembly acts as a forum of consultation and cooperation for the implementation of the HUC programmes through its members.

The General Assembly serves as the highest governing and decision-making body of HUC and has primary responsibility for endorsing the recommendations of the Steering Committee on the following matters:

- approving new HUC members;
- amending the HUC Charter and Bylaws;
- appointing or dismissing members of the Steering Committee;
- approving proposals for the hosting of the Secretariat;
- initiating and overseeing programme development and delivery;
- prioritizing academic programmes and interventions within the structure of the strategy;
- establishing its rules and procedure;
- dissolving the Himalayan University Consortium.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is elected and mandated by the General Assembly to formulate and recommend policies and strategies to the General Assembly and has general responsibility for HUC's development and for its main priorities.

The Steering Committee consists of elected individuals, numbering at least five and not more than eleven, including one representative from each of the eight HKH countries and two representatives from non-HKH members, but will always consist of an odd number of members.

Each member of the Steering Committee serves a three-year term, renewable once, based on his/her performance and upon approval by members at the Annual Meeting.

Responsibilities of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee develops and recommends the strategic plan and major initiatives for the Consortium, and oversees the implementation of the strategic goals set by the General Assembly Meeting and the work of the focused project teams or committees. The SC develops and directs the annual work plan of the Consortium, including a clear timeframe for starting and completing each project undertaken by the teams or committees. The SC shall provide guidance and approve proposals, documents on procedures and action plans prepared by the Secretariat and task forces.

The SC has the authority and primary responsibility for:

- strategic planning and setting institutional priorities;
- organizational development and institutional accountability, including making recommendations on membership fees and other charges;
- recommendation of new members to General Assembly for approval;
- fundraising, finances, and budgeting for the Consortium's activities;
- public and external relations;
- drafting recommendations for amendments of HUC Bylaws and the HUC Charter.

Election of the Steering Committee

The members of the SC are elected by the General Assembly from slates of nominees collected by the Secretariat. All members of the General Assembly are eligible to nominate individuals to serve as SC member. Members' representatives in an HKH country may establish, through consensus, a procedure to nominate a country representative through the country chapter. Considerations of gender balance, inclusiveness and geographical

diversity should be taken into account in the nomination of SC members, with emphasis placed on women leadership.

The Head of the Institution hosting the HUC Secretariat serves as the Chair of the Steering Committee, or depute his other representative if unavailable for SC meetings. The Lead of the HUC Secretariat serves as the Member Secretary of the Steering Committee.

Nominees to the SC should have the following qualifications:

- commitment to the mission and values of the HUC;
- willingness to devote time and energy to the HUC;
- professional experience in higher education and/or public service;
- high credibility with key HUC constituencies;
- demonstrated judgment;
- freedom from conflicts of interest;
- professionalism and personal integrity.

HUC Secretariat

The HUC Secretariat is responsible for administrative and financial operations and organizational tasks, and for providing support to HUC's governance bodies. The Secretariat works closely with the Steering Committee on all matters pertaining to HUC administration. It supports the preparation for Steering Committee's meetings and General Assembly Meetings and is present at the meetings of these bodies.

The Secretariat is provided as an in-kind contribution by or through the good offices of one or more HUC members. The ICIMOD continues to host and provide operational costs for the Secretariat. It is led by a fulltime Secretariat Lead, with the assistance of a Programme Associate. Members may contribute short or long term staff to the Secretariat to carry out administrative or research work sponsored by the HUC or its members.

The Secretariat's tasks are to:

- report to the Steering Committee and presents annual plans and budgets to the Steering Committee for discussion and approval;
- maintain a membership registry;
- serve as first point of contact for potential new members;
- oversee preparations and provide secretarial functions for all SC and General Assembly meetings, and keep and distribute minutes of actions taken in those meetings;

- maintain and keep adequate and correct accounts of the activities of the HUC Secretariat and report on overall HUC financial activities;
- register and report on all activities carried out under the sponsorship of HUC on an annual basis;
- manage and upkeep the HUC Online Portal;
- perform other duties prescribed by the General Assembly and the Steering Committee.

Advisory Committees, Task Forces, and Thematic Working Groups

The Steering Committee may appoint standing advisory committee and temporary task forces to facilitate communication and the work of the Consortium. Members will typically, though not universally, include a representative from each of the member universities. Each advisory committee includes a SC representative who acts as a liaison between the advisory committee and the SC.

Thematic Working Groups

TWGs are members-led clusters of HUC institutions who come together over shared interests in a thematic area. TWGs operate on the basis of shared leadership and resources.

TWGs may participate in research cooperation, development and delivery of varying forms of shared and joint education on all levels, utilize mobility and mobilize resources for cooperation, engage in knowledge development and organize dialogue with policy makers and society to identify and address issues of common concern of sustainable mountain development for the HKH.

TWGs are required to address gender and social inclusiveness issues from subject matter and methodological perspectives as well as in the representativeness of the groups.

Country Chapters

HKH members in a country may decide to establish a country chapter with its structure and governance agreed by members. HUC country chapters function in line with the Consortium's vision and mandates and comply with its rules and regulations.

Amendments to the Bylaws

The HUC Bylaws may be amended at any time.

Amendments to these bylaws can be proposed by members of the General Assembly or Steering Committee members. Notices of proposed amendments are circulated to all

members at least thirty days prior to the Annual Meeting at which decisions are made by consensus. Amendments must be approved by the General Assembly by a two-thirds majority of all members, either present or via e-voting, with at least 50% of all members as a minimum quorum in the General Assembly.